

Hello everyone,

My name is Migdalia Rockwell. I live in Hamden and work at a fantastic childcare center. I started working in childcare part time while my husband was the main breadwinner. I loved children and this would allow me to gain some extra money for extracurricular activities for my three children. When he unfortunately passed away ten years ago my part-time job for extra money became my full-time career and primary income. Along the way, I became passionate about child development and decided that I needed to go back to school to get my degree. This way I could continue to do what I love and what I am good at; and at the same time hopefully make enough money to make ends meet.

Of course the wages of a childcare provider are not even close to enough, so I also babysat after hours while going to school part time. Through my journey to educate myself I got my Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education and tried...so hard....to continue for my Bachelors. In the end I couldn't afford tuition so I was forced to stop. You can't receive a student loan unless you go to school full time so this was not an option for me.

I have been in this field for 16 years. I am a great infant teacher and yet, I am still, at 55 years old, dedicating my evenings and some weekends to babysit to make ends meet.

I am in this field because I am passionate about early childhood education. The babies in my classroom are away from their families for 40-50 hours per week, and as their infant teacher, I am giving them experiences that will build the 85% of their brain that develops before they turn 3. I am their home away from home! They may not remember me when they grow up, but the love, care and consistency that I provide them in their parents' absence will have such a positive impact on their future- teaching them empathy, problem solving, and emotional intelligence. **Not to mention being also trained in Epipen administration and I strongly support having a policy to be able to administer the Epipen to a child having an anaphylactic reaction whether or not that child has a prescription which can save that child's life.**

I know my work is important. But I will be honest, my life is exhausting. I love the center I work in and the amazing colleagues that I get to see every day. However, when I think about how I am going to be able to plan for retirement and survive while still working in this field- I honestly do not see it happening and it's daunting.

A child's success in school and beyond depends on the experiences they are given and the relationships they form in their first five years. The weight of the world is on our shoulders! We are Brain Architects and we should be paid as such.